

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A method for concealing the true identity of a user in a communications system comprising a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, a service network serving the first and the second user equipment, the method comprising:
 - requesting a virtual identifier by means of the first user equipment;
 - establishing the virtual identifier for the first user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network;
 - linking the virtual identifier of the first user equipment to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment; and
 - using the virtual identifier of the first user equipment for communication between the first and the second user equipment.
2. (Original) A method of claim 1, the method further comprising requesting the virtual identifier from the service network.
3. (Original) A method of claim 1, the method further comprising requesting multiple virtual identifiers from the service network.
4. (Canceled)
5. (Original) A method of claim 1, wherein the service network comprises a set of virtual identifiers, one or more of which are linked to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment.

6. (Original) A method of claim 1, the method further comprising selecting, in the service network, the virtual identifier to be used for communication between the first and the second user equipment.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) A method of claim 1, the method further comprising transmitting to the service network a request for establishing a communications connection between the first and the second user equipment, the request comprising the virtual identifier of the first user equipment.

9. (Original) A method of claim 8, the method further comprising using a short message service for transmitting the request for establishing the communications connection between the first and the second user equipment.

10. (Original) A method of claim 8, the method further comprising using an electronic mail server service for transmitting the request for establishing the communications connection between the first and the second user equipment.

11. (Original) A method of claim 8, the method further comprising transmitting the request for establishing the communications connection between the first and the second user equipment from the second user equipment.

12. (Original) A method of claim 11, the method further comprising receiving, in the first user equipment, information about the use of the virtual identifier of the first user equipment.

13. (Original) A method of claim 1, the method further comprising predetermining a given validity period during which the virtual identifier is valid.

14. (Original) A method of claim 1, the method further comprising predetermining one or more user equipment that have the right to use the virtual identifier.

15. (Currently amended) An arrangement for concealing the true identity of a user in a communications system comprising: a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, a service network connecting the first and the second user equipment, wherein the arrangement is configured to:

request a virtual identifier by means of the first user equipment;

establish the virtual identifier for the first user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network;

link the virtual identifier of the first user equipment to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment; and

use the virtual identifier of the first user equipment for communication between the first and the second user equipment.

16. (Original) An arrangement of claim 15, wherein the arrangement is configured to request the virtual identifier from the service network.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) An arrangement of claim 15, wherein the arrangement is configured to establish multiple virtual identifiers in the service network.

19. (Original) An arrangement of claim 15, wherein the service network comprises a set of virtual identifiers and the arrangement is configured to link one or more of the virtual identifiers to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment.

20. (Original) An arrangement of claim 15, wherein the arrangement is configured to transmit to the service network a request for establishing a communications connection between the first and the second user equipment, the request comprising the virtual identifier of the first user equipment.

21. (New) A user equipment, comprising a first characteristic identifier, the user equipment communicating via a service network with a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, wherein the user equipment is configured to:

 establish a virtual identifier for the user equipment in at least one of the following:
the first user equipment and the service network;

 link the virtual identifier of the user equipment to the first characteristic identifier of the user equipment; and

 use the virtual identifier of the user equipment for communication between the user equipment and the second user equipment.

22. (New) The user equipment of claim 21, wherein the user equipment is configured to establish multiple virtual identifiers.

23. (New) The user equipment of claim 21, wherein the user equipment is configured to receive information about the use of the virtual identifier linked to the first characteristic identifier of the user equipment from the service network when a connection is established between the user equipment and the second user equipment.

24. (New) A service for concealing the true identity of a user in a communications system comprising: a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, a service network connecting the first and the second user equipment, comprising:

 establishing a virtual identifier for the first user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network;

linking the virtual identifier of the first user equipment to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment; and

using the virtual identifier of the first user equipment for communication between the first and the second user equipment.

25. (New) The service of claim 24, wherein the virtual identifier to be used for communication between the first and the second user equipment is selected in the service network.

26. (New) The service of claim 24, comprising transmitting to the service network a request for establishing a communications connection between the first and the second user equipment, the request comprising the virtual identifier of the first user equipment.

27. (New) The service of claim 26, wherein information about the use of the virtual identifier of the first user equipment is sent to the first user equipment.

28. (New) The service of claim 24, comprising predetermining a given validity period during which the virtual identifier is valid.

29. (New) The service of claim 24, comprising predetermining one or more user equipment that have the right to use the virtual identifier.

30. (New) A service for concealing the true identity of a user in a communications system that includes a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, a service network connecting the first and the second user equipment, comprising:

establishing a connection between the first user equipment and the second user equipment when a virtual identifier established for the first user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network, and linked to the first

characteristic identifier of the first user equipment is used by the second user equipment for establishing a connection to the first user equipment.

31. (New) A server in a service network of a communications system comprising: a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, the service network connecting the first and the second user equipment, wherein the server is configured to:

establish a virtual identifier for the first user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network; and

link the virtual identifier of the first user equipment to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment for enabling the use of the virtual identifier of the first user equipment for communication between the first and the second user equipment.

32. (New) The server of claim 31, wherein the server comprises a database of available virtual identifiers.

33. (New) The server of claim 31, wherein the server is further configured to send the virtual identifier to the first user equipment via a short message service.

34. (New) A server in a service network of a communications system comprising: a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, the service network connecting the first and the second user equipment, wherein the server is configured to:

link a virtual identifier established for the first user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network to the first characteristic identifier of the first user equipment for enabling the use of the virtual identifier of the first user equipment for communication between the first and the second user equipment.

35. (New) The server of claim 34, wherein the server is further configured to compare a virtual identifier received from the first user equipment or the second user equipment with characteristic identifiers linked to virtual identifiers in a database of the server for enabling establishing a connection between the first user equipment and the second user equipment.

36. (New) A database in a service network of a communications system comprising: a first user equipment having a first characteristic identifier, a second user equipment having a second characteristic identifier, the service network connecting the first and the second user equipment, wherein the database comprises a list of virtual identifiers wherein one or more virtual identifiers established for the user equipment in at least one of the following: the first user equipment and the service network are stored and linked to the respective characteristic identifiers of the user equipment, and where virtual identifiers received from the first user equipment or second user equipment are compared with the characteristic identifiers linked to the virtual identifiers for enabling the use of the virtual identifiers for communication between the first and the second user equipment.